AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a first passenger seating area;

a front door located laterally adjacent the first seating area;

a second passenger seating area located rearwardly of the first seating area;

a second door located laterally adjacent the second seating area, the second door being located on the same side as and rearwardly of the first door; and

a structural reinforcement located between the first and second seating areas, the reinforcement being laterally elongated and having a lower structural beam and an upper structural beam;

a majority of the lower beam being located substantially adjacent a vehicle floor area; and

the upper structural beam being located substantially adjacent a vehicular belt-line area;

wherein the lower beam of the structural reinforcement is raised adjacent the fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle.

2. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a first diagonal beam extending between the upper and lower beams.

3. (previously presented) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a first passenger seating area;

a front door located laterally adjacent the first seating area;

a second passenger seating area located rearwardly of the first seating area;

a second door located laterally adjacent the second seating area, the second door being located on the same side as and rearwardly of the first door; and

a structural reinforcement located between the first and second seating areas, the reinforcement being laterally elongated and having a lower structural beam and an upper structural beam;

a majority of the lower beam being located substantially adjacent a vehicle floor area; and

wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a first diagonal beam extending between the upper and lower beams; and

wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a second diagonal beam crossing the first diagonal beam and extending between the upper and lower beams.

4. (previously presented) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a first passenger seating area;

a front door located laterally adjacent the first seating area;

a second passenger seating area located rearwardly of the first seating area;

a second door located laterally adjacent the second seating area, the second door being located on the same side as and rearwardly of the first door; and

a structural reinforcement located between the first and second seating areas, the reinforcement being laterally elongated and having a lower structural beam and an upper structural beam;

a majority of the lower beam being located substantially adjacent a vehicle floor area; and

wherein the upper beam of the structural reinforcement is lower in height adjacent a fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle.

5. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 4 wherein the lower beam of the structural reinforcement is raised adjacent the fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle, and the vehicle is of a unibody construction.

6. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising an entertainment system attached to the structural reinforcement.

7. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 6 wherein the entertainment system includes a rear passenger audio transmitting device.

8. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising a rear passenger safety restraint is attached to the structural reinforcement.

9. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 8 wherein the rear passenger safety restraint is an inflatable airbag.

10. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising at least one roll bar attached to the structural reinforcement.

11. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 3 further comprising an electronic device attached to the structural reinforcement.

12. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising armor attached to the structural reinforcement.

13. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the structural reinforcement assists the vehicle in satisfactorily passing Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard side impact test 214.

14. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not restrained by the structural reinforcement.

15. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 further comprising a convertible roof movable to a raised position, covering the front and rear seating areas, to a retracted position.

16. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 1 wherein the structural reinforcement is hydroformed metal.

17. (previously presented) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a front passenger seat;

a rear passenger seat located substantially behind the front seat;

a left structural rocker panel;

a right structural rocker panel; and

a structure extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the front and rear seats, a first portion of the structure being adjacent at least a vehicular beltline, a second portion of the structure being coupled to the rocker panels, the structure including at least two crossing diagonal beams;

the front seat being movable in a fore-and-aft direction independent of the structure.

18. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 wherein the first portion of the structure comprises an upper structural beam and the second portion of the structure comprises a lower structural beam.

19. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 18 wherein a first of the diagonal beams extends between the upper and lower beams.

20. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 19 wherein a second of the diagonal beams extends between the upper and lower beams.

21. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising at least four passenger doors, at least two in front of the structural device and at least two behind the structure.

22. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 21 further comprising left and right B-pillars extending substantially vertically above the rocker panels, the structure being directly attached to the B-pillars, the rocker panels and B-pillars being of unibody construction.

23. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 22 further comprising door hardware directly mounted to the structure.

24. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising an entertainment system attached to the structure.

25. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 24 wherein the entertainment system includes a rear passenger audio transmitting device.

26. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising a rear passenger safety restraint attached to the structure.

27. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 26 wherein the rear passenger safety restraint is an inflatable airbag.

28. (previously presented) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a front passenger seat;

a rear passenger seat located substantially behind the front seat;

a left structural rocker panel;

a right structural rocker panel; and

a structure extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the front and rear seats, a first portion of the structure being adjacent at least a vehicular beltline, a second portion of the structure being coupled to the rocker panels;

the front seat being movable in a fore-and-aft direction independent of the structure;

wherein the first portion of the structure device is an upper structural beam which is lower in height adjacent a fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle.

29. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 24 further comprising at least one roll bar attached to the structure.

30. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising an electronic device attached to the structure.

31. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 wherein the structure is hydroformed metal.

32. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising armor attached to the structure.

33. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 17 further comprising a convertible roof automatically movable to a raised position, covering the front and rear seats, to a retracted position.

34. (currently amended) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position; [[and]]

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a substantially hollow upper beam extending in a cross-vehicle direction substantially adjacent a beltline of the body; and

at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not attached to the structural reinforcement.

35. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising an entertainment system attached to the structural reinforcement.

36. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 35 wherein the entertainment system includes a rear passenger audio transmitting device.

37. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising a rear passenger safety restraint attached to the structural reinforcement.

38. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 37 wherein the rear passenger safety restraint is an inflatable airbag.

39. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises:

a lower structure beam; and

at least two crossing and diagonal, structural beams;

wherein the lower and diagonal beams are all substantially hollow.

40. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 wherein the upper beam of the structural reinforcement is lower in height adjacent a fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle.

41. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising at least one roll bar attached to the structural reinforcement.

42. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not attached to the structural reinforcement.

43. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 wherein the convertible roof further comprises:

an automatic actuator;

roof rails and roof bows operably movable by the actuator; and

a pliable roof cover attached to the roof bows.

44. (original) The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 wherein the convertible roof further comprises:

an automatic actuator; and

at least one hard-top roof panel operably movable by the actuator.

45. (currently amended) ~~The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising~~ An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position;

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a substantially hollow upper beam extending in a cross-vehicle direction substantially adjacent a beltline of the body; and

a structural rocker panel attached to the structural reinforcement.

46. (currently amended) ~~The automotive vehicle of Claim 34 further comprising~~ An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position;

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a substantially hollow upper beam extending in a cross-vehicle direction substantially adjacent a beltline of the body; and

a central floor tunnel attached to the structural reinforcement.

47.-69. (cancelled).

70. (currently amended) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area, the body also having a floor;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position; and

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a first beam having a majority portion extending in a cross-vehicle direction spaced away from the floor;

wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a second beam upwardly extending in a diagonal manner from the first beam adjacent a substantially vertically extending B-pillar.

71. (currently amended) ~~The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 further comprising~~ An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area, the body also having a floor;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position;

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a beam having a majority portion extending in a cross-vehicle direction spaced away from the floor; and

an entertainment system attached to the structural reinforcement.

72. (currently amended) ~~The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 further comprising~~ An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body having a front seating area and a rear seating area, the body also having a floor;

at least one front passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the front seating area;

at least one rear passenger door opening positioned to allow access to the rear seating area;

a convertible roof movable from a raised position, covering at least one of the seating areas, to a retracted position;

a structural reinforcement extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction between the seating areas, the structural reinforcement including a beam having a majority portion extending in a cross-vehicle direction spaced away from the floor; and

a rear passenger safety restraint attached to the structural reinforcement.

73. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises:

a lower structure beam located adjacent the floor; and

at least two crossing and diagonal, structural beams;

wherein the lower and diagonal beams are all substantially hollow.

74. (currently amended) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the first beam of the structural reinforcement is lower in height adjacent a fore-and-aft extending centerline of the vehicle.

75. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 further comprising at least one roll bar attached to the structural reinforcement.

76. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 further comprising at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not attached to the structural reinforcement.

77. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the convertible roof further comprises:

an automatic actuator;

roof rails and roof bows operably movable by the actuator; and

a pliable roof cover attached to the roof bows.

78. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the convertible roof further comprises:

an automatic actuator; and

at least one hard-top roof panel operably movable by the actuator.

79. (currently amended) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the first beam is an upper beam attached to B-pillars of the body substantially adjacent a beltline of the body.

80. (currently amended) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a lower beam extending in a substantially cross-vehicle direction and a first diagonal beam extending between the first ~~upper~~ and lower beams.

81. (previously presented) A method of manufacturing a portion of an automotive vehicle including two front passenger door openings, at least two rear passenger door openings, substantially vertical pillars each located between the front and rear door openings, a vehicle floor, an internal structure, and front passenger seats, the method comprising:

(a) creating the internal structure from a rigid material to comprise at least two elongated and generally parallel members;

(b) securing the internal structure to the pillars with a majority of each of the members extending in a generally cross-vehicle direction from at least a center of the vehicle to at least one of the pillars, substantially below a vehicle beltline and above the vehicle floor;

(c) allowing the front passenger seats to move independently of the internal structure; and

(d) mounting a convertible roof to the automotive vehicle.

82. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising:

(a) spacing one of the members above the other; and

(b) affixing diagonal beams between the members.

83. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising creating the members with a closed wall cross-sectional shape defining a substantially hollow center.

84. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising automatically opening and closing the convertible roof.

85. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising spacing at least one of the members away from a floor of the vehicle.

86. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising using the structure to assist in passing Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard side impact test 214.

87. (previously presented) The method of Claim 81 further comprising creating a diagonally extending beam upwardly extending from at least one of the members.

88. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 3 further comprising at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not restrained by the structural reinforcement.

89. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 4 further comprising at least two front seats located in the front seating area, the front seats being independently movable and not restrained by the structural reinforcement.

90. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 3 further comprising a convertible roof movable from a raised position to retracted position.

91. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 4 further comprising a convertible roof movable from a raised position to retracted position.

92. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 28 further comprising a convertible roof movable from a raised position to retracted position.

93. (currently amended) The automotive vehicle of Claim 72 [[34]] wherein the structural reinforcement assists the vehicle in satisfactorily passing Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard side impact test 214.

94. (previously presented) The automotive vehicle of Claim 70 wherein the structural reinforcement assists the vehicle in satisfactorily passing Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard side impact test 214.

95. (currently amended) The automotive vehicle of Claim 72 [[70]] wherein the structural reinforcement further comprises a second beam upwardly extending in a diagonal manner from the beam adjacent a substantially vertically extending B-pillar.